

Keeping people in the loop: Socioeconomic valuation of dry forest ecosystem services in the Colombian Caribbean region

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Abstract

Tropical dry forests (TDF) are one of the most endangered ecosystems in the world, especially in Colombia. One way to promote TDF conservation is by upholding the valuation of the ecosystem services they provide. Therefore, in order to deepen the understanding regarding the conservation of TDF from the perspective of local communities, we sampled two populations for our analysis: the first one consisted of people living inside a TDF protected area, while the second one was made up of urban inhabitants living near the TDF. Through a contingent valuation study, we found that 71% of urban inhabitants were willing to pay 12,119 USD/year to the protected area's inhabitants to implement conservation strategies and also that 100% of the protected area's dwellers were willing to participate of the strategy. Hence, we proposed a payment for ecosystem services scheme. Lastly, we observed that inhabitants' high participation rates for the proposed strategy related to the high importance given to TDF-provided ecosystem services.

Keywords

Existence value, Instrumental values, Payment for ecosystem services, Protected área, Willingness to participate